

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claim 3. Thus, claims 1, 2 and 4-32 are now pending in this application. In response to the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims define patentable subject matter.

I. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 22-26 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner contends that it unclear whether the claims require all filaments of the sheath layers have the same diameter or only the filaments within a given sheath layer have the same diameter. By this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 22-26 and 32 to require that all filaments in each (individual) sheath layer have the same diameter (i.e., only the filaments in a given sheath layer have the same diameter), and that the filaments of the outermost sheath layer (claims 23, 25, 26 and 32) or the one sheath layer (claims 22 and 24 and) have a diameter which is larger that a diameter of the filaments of the core. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to remove the § 112, second paragraph, rejection.

II. Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by newly cited Ikehara (JP 08081889). Claims 1, 2, 5 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as

being anticipated by newly cited Morgan (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,830). Applicant respectfully traverses the prior art rejections.

By this Amendment, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 2, 5 and 20 to recite a strand structure having two sheath layers (i.e., an inner sheath layer and an outer sheath layer) surrounding a core, wherein the filaments of the outer sheath layer have a diameter which is larger than a diameter of the filaments of the inner sheath layer and the core.¹ Applicant respectfully submits that neither Ikehara nor Morgan discloses this feature of the claimed invention.

Ikehara discloses a steel cord including a core strand surrounded by a plurality of sheath strands, wherein each of the core and sheath strands include a core and at least one sheath layer surrounding the core. Ikehara further discloses that a diameter D_c of the filaments of the core may be larger than or smaller than the diameter D_s of the filaments of the sheath layer (e.g., $0.6D_s \leq D_c \leq 1.1D_s$) and provides various examples with regard to the filament diameters in Tables 1 and 2. However, Ikehara does not disclose multiple sheath layers having filaments of different diameters (i.e., Ikehara teaches that filaments of an inner sheath layer have the same diameter as filaments of an outer sheath layer).

Morgan discloses a steel cord including a core strand surrounded by a plurality of sheath strands, wherein the core and sheath strands include a single sheath layer surrounding a core. Although Morgan discloses that a diameter of the filaments of the single sheath layer is larger

¹ Claims 1 and 20 further require that the filaments of the inner sheath layer have a diameter which is larger than a diameter of the at least one filament of the core.

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than a diameter of the filaments the core, Morgan does not disclose multiple sheath layers surrounding the core.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 2, 5 and 20 should be allowable because the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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